

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMISSION
OF FINE ARTS HELD ON FRIDAY,
July 26, 1918, to July 27, 1918,
and of the committee meeting held in New
York City at Mr. Platt's office
on Tuesday, July 30, 1918.

120
in hand

The first meeting of the Commission of Fine Arts during the fiscal year 1919 was held in its office at 1729 New York Avenue, NW., Washington, D. C., on Friday, July 26, 1918.

The following members were present:

Charles Moore, Chariman;

Frederick Law Olmsted, Vice-Chairman;

Herbert Adams;

J. Alden Weir;

Charles A. Platt;

Wm. Mitchell Kendall;

John Russell Pope;

Colonel C. S. Ridley, Secretary and Executive Officer of the Commission also was present throughout the entire meeting.

The Commission was called to order at 9:30 a. m., and immediately proceeded to the business before it.

1. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE PRECEDING MEETING: The minutes of the preceding meeting held on May 10, 1918, were presented by the Secretary and approved.
2. MARQUISES ON THE HOTEL WASHINGTON: The Secretary laid before the Commission a blueprint showing a proposed design and locations of several mar-
quises which the National Capital Hotel Corporation proposed to erect on the F and 15th street sides of the new Hotel Washington, and which were submitted for an opinion by the Commissioners of the District of Columbia. After an inspection of the two entrances of the hotel in question, the designs were not considered in harmony with the building itself, and out of harmony

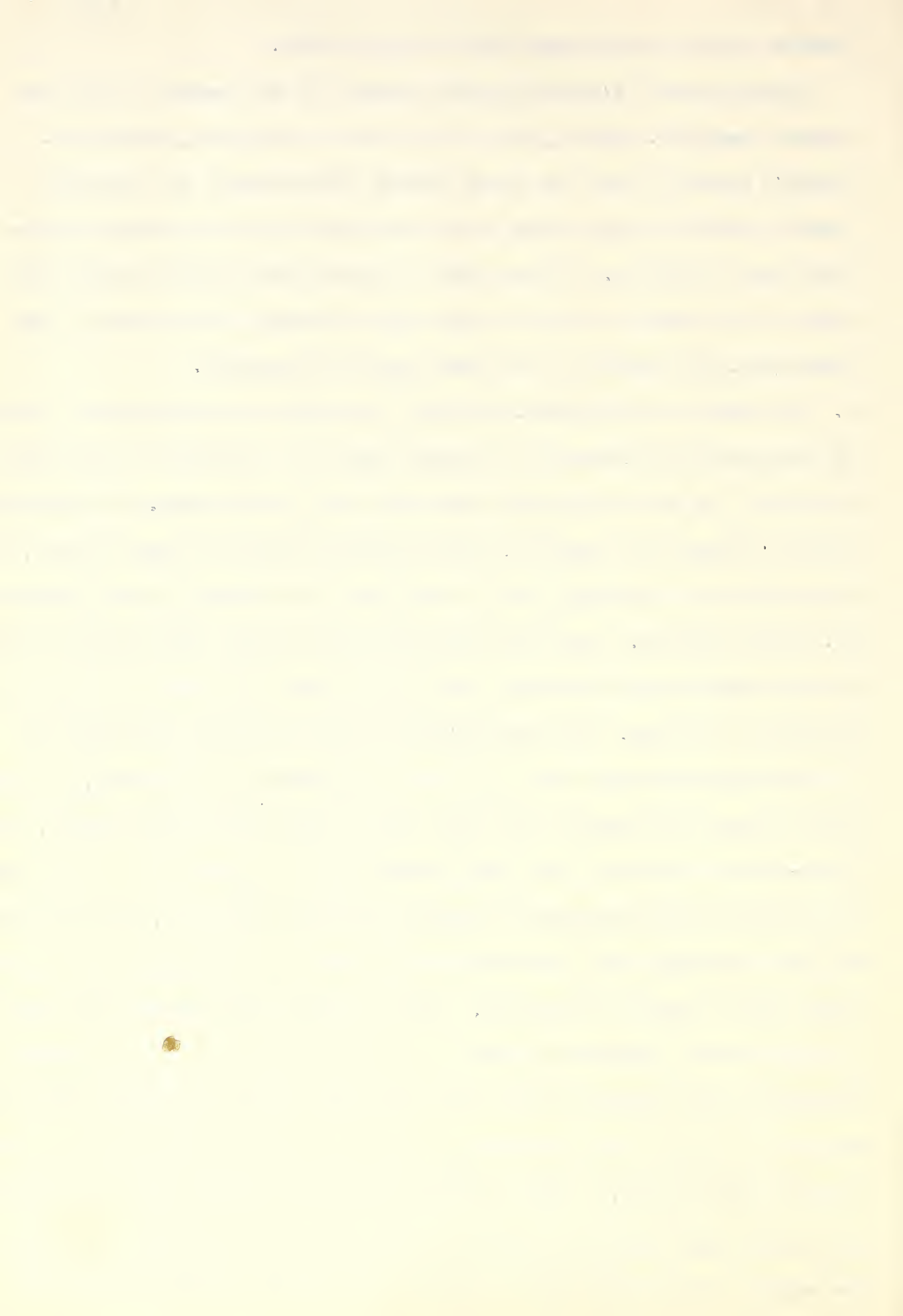
with the Treasury building and with the character of the new construction along 15th street generally. The Commission therefore decided to recommend to the District Commissioners disapproval of the request to erect the marquises. (See Exhibit A.)

3. CONFERENCE WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE MEADE MEMORIAL COMMISSION, AND INSPECTION IN PHILADELPHIA OF LATEST MODEL BY MR. GRAFLY: At 11 o'clock, Messrs. John W. Frazier, Secretary, and John B. Patrick, Treasurer, of the Meade Memorial Commission of the State of Pennsylvania, accompanied by Colonel John McElroy, Editor of the National Tribune, and his Assistant, Mrs. Ball, appeared before the Commission upon appointment. It was an unofficial representation, and, as Mr. Frazier stated, they were not speaking for their Commission since they had had no meeting to secure authority. Mr. Frazier said that it was his opinion that, in view of the death of their professional adviser, Mr. Frank Miles Day, it would be necessary for them to have a successor to him, and he wanted to get a recommendation from the Commission as to who would be considered the best. He added, however, that if the Grafly design would be adopted probably the necessity for a professional adviser would no longer exist. Mr. Patrick stated that he had spoken to the Governor some time ago, and that the latter said he was waiting for the action of the Commission on the Grafly model, which their Commission as a whole had not yet seen, and asked about the authority of the Commission to view the various designs prepared by Mr. Grafly. Colonel McElroy, upon invitation to speak, pleaded for historic perspective in the erection of memorials in Washington, a thought with which the Commission expressed hearty sympathy. Mrs. Ball had opportunity to say a few words about a suitable memorial to General Meade. The representation then withdrew. In view of the fact that Mr. Frazier stated that they had no authority to appear from their Pennsylvania Commission and that their Commission had had no meeting since January, the

members did not consider any formal reply in order.

Shortly after 8 o'clock Saturday evening, all the members of the Commission except Mr. Olmsted, who had left them at Baltimore, visited Mr. Grafly's studio at 20th and Cherry Streets, Philadelphia, and inspected several modified designs which he had prepared since the preceding inspection there on May 9th. The one which he particularly favored, showing the crown of the memorial filled by wings and an insignia was approved by the Commission. (See Exhibit B for formal letter of approval).

4. KEY MEMORIAL IN BALTIMORE, MARYLAND: Congress has authorized and directed the erection of a memorial to Francis Scott Key and others at Fort McHenry, Baltimore, the exact site having long since been decided upon. The Memorial itself, a statue on a pedestal, with an over-all height of about 40 feet, has been practically completed, and is about ready for delivery by the sculptor, Mr. Charles Niehaus. Due to war conditions the original site has been covered with temporary war buildings, which undoubtedly will remain until long after the close of the war. The proposition therefore was made by the Mayor of Baltimore and others to erect it, either temporarily or permanently, on the Plaza between the Baltimore City Hall and the future Municipal building. The Judge-Advocate General of the Army decided that a temporary or permanent location without express sanction by Congress would be impossible, but it was obvious that an attempt would be made to secure such enabling legislation in case there were no artistic objections. Colonel Ridley placed before the Commission a request of the Secretary of War "as to the advisability of the temporary location of this statue at this place (City Hall Square) as against what I understand to be the only alternative, which is storage until the permanent emplacement can be made." After a personal inspection of the proposed location on the City Hall Square at 3:30 o'clock the following (Saturday) afternoon, the members all believed that in justice to the United States, the City of



Baltimore, and the sculptor, the memorial should not be placed even temporarily in the proposed location, where it would be out of scale with the square and the surrounding buildings. They advised the acceptance of the alternative proposition, namely, to store the statue until the permanent historic location at Fort McHenry shall be available (See Exhibit C.) Extracts from letters from Mr. Thomas Hastings of Carrere and Hastings, architects of New York City, from Mayor Preston of Baltimore, and from a petition from the Maryland Society of the Sons of the American Revolution, all in favor of its location on the City Hall Plaza, were read by the Secretary, and the exhibits ordered placed on file.

5. BUCHANAN MEMORIAL: By Act approved June 27, 1918, Congress authorized and directed the erection in Meridian Hill Park of a memorial to James Buchanan, a former President of the United States, and provided that "the design and location of said memorial and the plan for the treatment of the grounds connected with its site shall be approved by the Commission of Fine Arts...". The Commission, informally and unofficially, for several years had been in touch with the progressive studies of the sculptor and architect selected by the representative of the donor of the memorial, but had not had the opportunity to give official approval since the passage of the Act. At 12 o'clock noon, Mr. Lawrason Riggs, the surviving executor under the will of Harriet Lane Johnston (who left \$100,000 for the erection of the memorial), Mr. Beecher, architect, Mr. Schuler, Sculptor, and Mr. Wyatt, advisory architect, appeared before the Commission for consultation regarding the preliminary model. After an inspection, the Commission officially approved the model with the understanding that certain changes pointed out at the time were to be made in the development of the larger models: These constituted briefly -

- 1st, - that the memorial should be moved back approximately forty feet so as to avoid the passageway behind it, the exact location to be decided on in consultation between Mr. Riggs' representatives and the

Officer in charge of Public Buildings and Grounds.

2d, - that both the sculpture and the other parts of the memorial shall be of marble.

3d, - that certain modifications pointed out as desirable to the sculptor and architect be made, such as the enlargements of the posts back of the two flanking figures and the elimination of the projections of the plinths at the base of the pilasters back of the Buchanan statue formerly intended for tripods, &c.

Mr. Riggs assured the Commission that these suggestions were acceptable, and would be observed in the future development of the design. See Exhibit ~~8~~⁸.

6 SUCCESSORS TO MR. MOORE AND MR. OLNSTED AS MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION: Colonel Ridley called the attention of the members to the fact that, both under the legal limitation of law and by arrangement with the President, the terms of service of Mr. Moore and Mr. Olmsted as members of the Commission expired on June 15th last. Under the organic act a retiring member serves until his successor has been appointed and has qualified.

The problem of deciding upon a successor to Mr. Olmsted as the landscape architect member of the Commission created some discussion, a number of possible eligibles being considered. The whole matter of recommending to the Commission a landscape architect for nomination to the President for the impending vacancy was left to a committee consisting of Mr. Olmsted, Mr. Kendall, Mr. Platt, and Mr. Pope, who are to report their suggestions at the next meeting.

In discussing the question of a nomination to the President of a successor to Mr. Moore, the other members of the Commission asked Colonel Ridley to submit to the President their unanimous wish that Mr. Moore be reappointed to succeed himself.

7. ANNAPOLIS NAVAL ACADEMY: Colonel Ridley read a letter from the Secretary of the Navy to the Commission advising that the Navy Department is contemplating the erection at the Naval Academy in Annapolis of a building to provide additional facilities for instruction purposes in Seamanship and Navigation, and an Auditorium

for general assembly purposes, for which an appropriation of \$2,500,000 has been obtained, and that in view of the magnitude and importance of this project and its relation to existing buildings he wanted to have the advice of the Commission of Fine Arts. He asked particular consideration with reference to the following four specific points:

- 1st, whether it is desirable or not to combine the facilities for instruction purposes in the same building with the auditorium.
- 2d, The suitability of the tentative design to fit in with the present scheme of the Naval Academy.
- 3d, The most suitable location for this combined building, or for the separate structures if it should be considered that two buildings would best fit in with the existing layout of the buildings.
- 4th, the general views of the Commission as to the principles which should be followed in location of additional buildings at the Naval Academy in case further expansion is undertaken.

The members of the Commission later in the afternoon inspected the plans and models for the project in the office of the architect J. Henri DeSibour in the Hibbs building, and also had a personal conference with the Secretary of the Navy. The Secretary took some time in explaining the situation and his point of view, and asked the members to visit the Academy for an inspection and consideration of the problem on the ground.

The full Commission visited the Naval Academy the following day (Saturday) accompanied by Commander Parsons of the Bureau of Yards and Docks, Navy Department, and J. Henri De Sibour, the architect of the proposed building, and made an inspection of the grounds with Rear Admiral Eberle, Superintendent of the Academy. It was then decided that the whole question of a definite report was to be left for a meeting in Mr. Platt's office in New York at 2 o'clock the following Tuesday.

At the meeting Mr. Pope submitted a plan which he felt presented a solution of the problem before the Commission. This plan, after slight modifications suggested by the other members were agreed to, was adopted as the recommendation

of the Commission for the solution of the problem. It was laid before the Secretary of the Navy on Friday, August 2, by the Chairman and the Secretary with a letter containing the following specific replies to his inquiries:

- 1st, that it is not desirable to combine the facilities for instruction purposes in the same building with the Auditorium.
- 2d, That the tentative design as prepared does not fit in with the present scheme of the Naval Academy. A building of the size contemplated, if placed on the edge of the basin where proposed, would be undesirably situated, would encroach upon the open center of the Academy group, would break the view of the Severn river, and would not be architecturally well placed in relation to the existing buildings.
- 3d, That the most suitable location for the structures needed is the location of the Auditorium and the building for instruction in Seamanship and Navigation as shown on the plan above mentioned and submitted to the Secretary.
- 4th, that the plan shows an arrangement looking to the future development of one portion of the Academy. In view of the expansion needed now and the probable expansion of activities in the future, the Commission considered that the time has come to prepare a general plan for the entire area so that the present group of buildings may be related organically to the Secondary group. If this shall be done the Academy would tend to efficiency in management and orderliness of appearance.

(See Exhibit F.)

8. WASHINGTON PARK MATTERS: After a short interval for lunch which was served in Colonel Ridley's private office, Colonel Ridley requested advice regarding a number of points arising in connection with his administration and development of the Washington parks:

Meridian Hill: Colonel Ridley requested an opinion as to the surfacing of walks in Meridian Hill Park, particularly the long vista walks from Euclid street to the high levels. He suggested the possibility of center cement float finish with border of cement tool finish, center brick herringbone pattern with border cement tool finish, or cement and tar as other park walks with gravel border. The Commission advised that the walks should be of the same character as the other concrete work, that is, scrubbed gravel.

Colonel Ridley also discussed with the members the desirability of employing

103

a competent landscape designer to carry out the planting and the development of the detail work. He was encouraged to proceed along this line.

A letter from Mrs. Mary B. Henderson making certain suggestions for the development of the park also was laid before the Commission by the Secretary, and ordered placed on file.

Montrose Park: At the top of the slope to the ravine toward the north in Montrose Park there are three large dead cedar trees which the landscape architect of Public Buildings and Grounds has recommended for removal. The trees are bare of branches and foliage, and, in his opinion, add nothing to the attractiveness of that end of the park. The Superintendent of Parks, however, says that these dead trees were left with the idea of planting vines at their base and permitting the vines to climb the tree and totally cover them, and that he believed this suggestion was made by the Commission at one of their visits. There is no record of such a recommendation. The Commission did not have the time to make a personal inspection of these trees, but it was advised that, in general, it is better to cut down dead trees than to let them stand.

East Potomac Park: Colonel Ridley presented a plan and sections (P. B. & G. 1 - 21-333.73 & 333.69) showing the proposed line of a road to be constructed near the point in East Potomac Park. Considerable discussion of the plan ensued, and later in the day the Commission went to the point for a personal inspection of the ground. Their suggestions were conveyed to Colonel Ridley in pencil on plan #1 - 21 - 333.69.

Lincoln Memorial grading plan: Several grading plans for the vicinity of the Lincoln Memorial were scrutinized and then approved (P. B. & G. 338.37 & .38) after a few suggestions for minor modifications had been carried out.

Depth of Lincoln Memorial Basin: Colonel Ridley brought up the question of a proper depth of the reflecting basin to the east of the Lincoln Memorial. During the ensuing discussion it was considered best to make the basin first of

such a depth as it was thought could properly be maintained, the final depth to be decided upon only after such experiment. A concrete lining for the bottom of the basin was mentioned but was considered too expensive.

The Commission then left the office and visited the point in East Potomac Park; thence they proceeded to the office in the Hibbs Building of J. Henri De Sibour, architect of the proposed Auditorium at Annapolis, Maryland, and inspected his plans and models for that work; from there they went to Meridian Hill Park for an inspection of the ground; and from there to the office of the Secretary of the Navy for a conference regarding the Annapolis, Maryland, building project. There being no further business to come before the meeting, the Commission adjourned at 7 p. m. to meet again the next morning at 9:30 at the Cosmos Club, where motors had been arranged for to take them to Annapolis for their inspection of the Naval Academy.

The Commission, accompanied by Colonel Ridley, Secretary, Mr. Cammerer, Commander Parsons of the Navy Department, and architect J. Henri De Sibour, left the Cosmos Club shortly before ten o'clock Saturday morning for Annapolis. Arriving there they called on Rear Admiral Eberle, Superintendent of the Academy, who discussed the design and location of the proposed Auditorium and the necessity of adequate housing for the Seamanship and Navigation activities. After spending several hours in the inspection of the grounds, the Commission lunched with Admiral and Mrs. Eberle.

The trip was then resumed for Baltimore, where the members called on city officials at the City Hall for a discussion of the proposition to place the Key Memorial either temporarily or permanently on the City Hall Plaza. Mayor Preston was absent, but Mr. Hastings, of Carrere and Hastings, architects, of New York City, was present. The Commission inspected the future Plaza site and then left on the 4 :08 train for Philadelphia.

Arriving in Philadelphia the members took dinner at the Bellevue-Stratford,

203

before going to Mr. Charles Grafly's studio at 20th and Cherry streets for the inspection of his latest model of the Meade Memorial. It was found that Mr. Grafly had prepared several small models showing the revisions he had made in the top, as urged by the Commission at the preceding visit to his studio. One sketch model showed a grain and fruit composition for the top, while the other, which Mr. Grafly favored, showed the top filled in by several wings and a military insignia. The members were gratified with the results of his re-study as shown by the latter model, and voted unanimously to approve it, with the understanding however that the figures on the drum will be in marble and the wings and military insignia in gilded bronze. The pedestal, Mr. Grafly stated, was not submitted for consideration at that time, and therefore the Commission took no action in respect of that portion of the memorial. See Exhibit E.

The Commission then adjourned, subject to the call of the Chairman.

MEETING AT MR. PLATT'S OFFICE, NEW YORK CITY, ON FOLLOWING TUESDAY: A committee meeting of the four architect members of the Commission was called for Mr. Platt's office at 2 p. m., Tuesday, July 30th, for conference on the final report to be made the Secretary of the Navy on the Annapolis Auditorium matter, Mr. Olmsted, Mr. Platt, Mr. Kendall, and Mr. Pope all being present. Mr. Weir and Mr. Moore were present as a committee, with the architects, on the Key Memorial and Meade Memorial submissions, and Also Colonel Ridley, Secretary, and Mr. Cammerer, his Assistant.

Action on the Annapolis matter was taken as shown under Section 7 of these minutes.

The Meade and Key Memorials were discussed, and action approved as shown under section 3 and 4 respectively of these minutes.

